

In Touch

Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers: Making a Difference throughout the Community

RMCC Volunteering in the Community

From Pueblo and Colorado Springs to Boulder, Longmont, Denver and Vail, RMCC's many team members reach out to the communities where we live and work. With 20 locations and more than 50 physicians and approximately 500 staff members, we are able to use our large pool of people and resources to benefit many communities throughout the state.



RMCC Midtown's Day of Denim

RMCC's volunteer efforts encompass a wide range of areas. For example, each year, we partner with other organizations to offer preventive skin cancer screenings throughout the Denver metropolitan area.

We also support, both financially and through the donation of time, numerous organizations and programs, such as the Day of Caring. This year, many of RMCC's locations held "Days of Denim" throughout the month of October as a way to raise money for Day of Caring. Each Friday in October, staff members could pay \$5 to wear jeans to work. RMCC then matched these donations, raising a total of \$1,200.

In addition to many other programs, RMCC also supports the Look Good...Feel Better program, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure,

the Colorado Cancer Research Program and the Diana Price-Fish Cancer Foundation which recently recognized RMCC and the Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers Foundation for their dedication to improving the lives of cancer patients throughout Colorado.

Internally, RMCC holds support groups that are open to all cancer patients, such as the weekly support group in Aurora for breast cancer patients. These groups provide patients with an outlet to share their experiences with others who can relate to them and offer encouragement and hope. RMCC also celebrates National Cancer Survivors' Day each year.

Throughout the year, the RMCC Foundation assists cancer patients throughout Colorado who are in financial need. RMCC raises money for the Foundation through annual fundraisers, including the Spirit Sprint, a silent auction and other activities. Numerous staff, physicians, patients and families are involved in making these events successful.

RMCC Thanks Its Volunteers

RMCC has numerous volunteers who give their time at RMCC's locations throughout Colorado. On behalf of our patients and staff, RMCC would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to our volunteers for their time and effort.

Legislation to Benefit the Community

In 2004, RMCC worked with Citizens for a Healthier Colorado to support Amendment 35 raising Colorado's tobacco tax and using the proceeds to fund vital state health programs.

With your help, Amendment 35 passed with 61 percent of the vote. It is expected to raise about \$175 million a year by increasing the tax on a pack of cigarettes from 20 cents to 84 cents and increasing the tax on tobacco products other than cigarettes from 20 percent to 40 percent of the price.

Sixteen percent, or \$28 million, will fund prevention and treatment of smoking-related illnesses like cancer and heart and lung diseases. Another 16 percent will go to tobacco education and anti-smoking programs. Nineteen percent will go to community health centers across the state. The final 46 percent (\$80.5 million) will be allocated to the Child Health Plan Plus program (CHP+) and the state Medicaid fund.

According to the state's official blue book voting guide, Colorado taxpayers pay millions of dollars each year in preventable tobacco-related health care costs. The new amendment will provide money to treat individuals who have tobacco-related illnesses and will lower future tobacco-related health care costs by reducing tobacco use throughout the state. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in Colorado, killing 4,200 Coloradans each year. Annual health care costs in Colorado directly related to smoking are more than \$1 billion. Every year, the state spends \$249 million to treat low-income individuals with tobacco-related illnesses.

President's Message



With a new year once again upon us, it is not only time to look forward to its possibilities but also to reflect and give thanks for all of our successes during 2004.

At RMCC we

are proud and thankful for the opportunity to give cancer patients hope — providing them with the most advanced treatments, technologies and research.

This past year was a time of continued growth and exciting changes. The addition of Jeff Poe, executive director; Karyn Gonzales, director of managed care and marketing; and five new physicians has brought new energy and enthusiasm to our team. In 2004 RMCC introduced Colorado's first mobile PET/CT system. The system began serving locations in the Denver metropolitan and Colorado Springs areas in February and was so successful its route was expanded in June. RMCC also opened a new center in Parker.

One of the year's pinnacle moments came in October at the annual Diana Price-Fish Cancer Foundation's Founder's Ball. RMCC and the RMCC Foundation were recognized as institutions that have made a positive impact on the lives of cancer patients throughout Colorado. We are honored to have received this award and we know that it would not have been possible without the daily efforts of our first-class team. Thank you for your dedication to our mission.

I wish you and your family a wonderful and joyous new year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Di Bella".

Nicholas J. Di Bella, M.D.

RMCC: Colorado's Leader in Cancer Research

As the leading cancer researcher in Colorado, RMCC has a comprehensive research program which provides new and exciting therapeutics to patients with cancer. RMCC's research department currently supports 17 full-time employees, including 12 experienced research nurses. RMCC participates in numerous clinical trials each year and has approximately 55 trials occurring at any one time. Since 1999, more than 1,000 of RMCC's patients have been involved in some type of clinical research study.

RMCC works with numerous research-based academic organizations to ensure access to a wide variety of trials for our patients. Trials available include industry-sponsored trials as well as investigator- or physician-initiated trials. The RMCC research program has access to trials for most therapeutic areas. Many of RMCC's clinical trials involve researching ways to increase the effectiveness of treatments while decreasing side effects. For more information about RMCC's research programs, visit the RMCC Web site at coloradocancercenters.com.

RMCC Patient Services

Community education and outreach are a core component of RMCC's services and have always been Susan Ash-Lee's passion. "As one of four social workers at RMCC, it's my job to make sure that oncology patients have access to the support and information that they need," she explains.

Most of Susan's time is spent working with patients and patients' families. She sees between six and eight patients/patient families per day, helping patients deal with anxiety, depression, stress and any a variety of other issues. She also meets with caregivers and families helping them cope with caregiver fatigue among other things. Many times patients and families are faced with financial issues. Susan acts as a resource, making sure families know what kind of financial aid is available and helping them determine if they may qualify.

When Susan is not meeting with patients and their families, she is coordinating some of the many programs and support groups that she facilitates each month. The monthly support groups deal with a variety of topics including stress management techniques, learning to live with fatigue, and managing and understanding treatment related side-effects such as "chemo brain." Susan also hosts support programs for couples navigating cancer as well as a group for young women with cancer.

"My days are always full," Susan says. "There is always something new to learn. I enjoy the creativity involved in organizing the many programs and the opportunity to meet and help so many interesting people."

RMCC Honored in the Community

- Drs. Lisa Adler, Alan Feiner, Robin Kovachy, Jeffrey Matous and Robert Rifkin were honored in 5280's 2004 Top Doctors issue.
- Drs. Dennis Carter, Susan Freeman and Jeffrey Matous were honored at HealthONE's oncology awareness event at the Cherry Creek Mall in October and November of 2004.
- Sami Diab, M.D., medical oncologist at RMCC's Aurora location, was selected to give an oral presentation at the 27th Annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in December. This symposium is the largest annual medical conference in the world dedicated solely to research on breast cancer.

From the Foundation

Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides financial assistance for the daily living needs of cancer patients and their families throughout Colorado. During 2004, the RMCC Foundation provided support to more than 300 cancer patients and their families, totaling approximately \$180,000.



Panera Bread presented a check to the RMCC Foundation for \$1,513.80 from the sale of pink ribbon bagels throughout the Front Range.

Planning has started for the sixth annual Spirit Sprint, the largest fundraiser of the year for the RMCC Foundation. The event will take place on Saturday, June 18, at City Park in Denver. For more information, please visit the official race Web site at spiritsprint.org.

Story of a Survivor

Cheryl, 57, was diagnosed 20 years ago with ovarian cancer. At that time she had surgery and underwent a year of oral chemotherapy. Her doctors thought the cancer was in remission, but it came back nine years ago and she has been in chemotherapy since. She still has cancer throughout her abdominal area. It was when her cancer came back that she decided to do something to help others. That is when she came up with the Teal Soiree. This is the first year for the fundraising event which will raise awareness about ovarian cancer and its symptoms.

Cheryl and her husband have five children, nine grandchildren and one great grandchild. "It's my family and my faith that keep me going. They are incredibly supportive," Cheryl explains. "When my cancer came back I believed I had a purpose; I needed to do something to create awareness about ovarian cancer.

"At the first support group I went to a woman who said she was blessed to have ovarian cancer. At the time I didn't understand where she was coming from," Cheryl says. "Now, I do. I really appreciate everything more and cherish my life."

In the News

- On October 11, *The Denver Post* ran a story about The Brian Fairbanks 5K Memorial Run benefiting the RMCC Foundation.
- On October 11, *The Denver Post* ran a brief about Dr. Matthew S. Logsdon, Dr. Douglas Reznick and Karyn Gonzales joining RMCC.
- On October 20, *The Rocky Mountain News* ran a column about the Founder's Ball honoring the RMCC Foundation and RMCC.
- On October 28, *The Parker Chronicle* ran a story on partial breast IMRT.
- On November 1, *The Denver Post* ran a column about the Founder's Ball honoring the RMCC Foundation and RMCC.
- On November 9, 7News (ABC) ran a story on partial breast IMRT featuring an RMCC patient.
- On November 10 Channel 11 (CBS in Colorado Springs) ran a story about an anonymous donor who is giving cancer patients at RMCC in Colorado Springs free lunches for a year.
- On November 22, *The Trinidad Chronicle* ran RMCC's community column on lung cancer which quoted Dr. Jotte.
- On November 25, *The Pagosa Springs Sun* ran RMCC's community column on lung cancer which quoted Dr. Jotte.
- On November 30, News4 ran a story on partial breast IMRT, featuring Dr. Leonard and an RMCC patient.
- On December 16, News4 ran a story about the Nation family and RMCC in Littleton.
- On December 2, *The Villager* ran a story entitled, "Panera Bread raises \$1,500 for Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers Foundation."
- On December 10, *The Boulder County Business Report* ran a brief about iKnowMed, RMCC's new EMR.
- On Sunday, December 26, *The Denver Post* ran a story about an RMCC patient entitled, "Cancer victim finds peace in the season."
- On December 31, *The Summit Daily News* ran a story entitled, "Living with Lung Cancer," which featured an RMCC patient and quoted Dr. Jotte.

Updates: Events In the Community

- RMCC had 71 staff members and 44 friends participate in the Susan G. Komen Denver Race for the Cure which was held on October 3, 2004, at the Pepsi Center.
- On Tuesday, October 19, RMCC's Ruth Oratz, M.D. spoke at a film screening featuring women and their views on genetic testing for breast cancer.
- On Wednesday, October 27, Robert Jotte, M.D., Ph.D. presented a free seminar on lung cancer which was held at P/SL Medical Center.
- On Tuesday, December 7, RMCC physicians Charles Zinn, M.D. and Paul Mitchell, M.D. held a community education lecture on lung cancer in Colorado Springs.
- On Saturday, January 29, RMCC physicians Dennis Carter, M.D. and Robert Jotte, M.D., Ph.D. will hold a community education lecture entitled, "Meeting the Challenge of Lung Cancer."
- More information about RMCC's community activities is located at www.coloradocancercenters.com.

Of Special Interest

A Special Gift

Recently an anonymous benefactor donated lunch, every day for a year, to cancer patients receiving chemotherapy at RMCC's Colorado Springs location. Honey Baked Ham will cater lunch for 50 patients every day for the next year.

The anonymous donor is providing these lunches to patients who are undergoing chemotherapy as a way to help both local and out-of-town patients make it through the day a little easier.



Thanks to a special gift, patients at RMCC's Colorado Springs location will enjoy a free lunch every day this year.

RMCC Helping Those in Need

In the spirit of the holiday season, the staff at RMCC's Littleton location adopted a patient's family for Christmas. RMCC recruited several area companies who donated numerous items, including furniture, Christmas decorations, gifts for the family's three children, a holiday meal and wedding rings for the couple who have been married for eight years.

As a result of the generosity shown by RMCC's staff, Macaroni Grill donated several Christmas gifts to another RMCC patient's family. This patient's 10-year-old son received a new bike and several other wonderful gifts.

New Electronic Medical Record: iKnowMed

Rocky Mountain Cancer Centers' Boulder and Longmont locations recently became the first oncology practices in Colorado to implement iKnowMed, an electronic medical record system developed specifically for outpatient oncology practices. iKnowMed is expected to be implemented in other RMCC divisions throughout 2005.

According to Mark Sitarik, M.D., medical oncologist at RMCC in Boulder, the iKnowMed system will benefit both physicians and patients. iKnowMed will give physicians throughout RMCC a single point of access to patient information which will enhance patient safety, improve continuity and standardization of care, and increase patient access to clinical research trials.

coloradocancercenters.com

Greenwood Village, CO 80111
Suite 300
7951 E. Maplewood Ave.

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